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SUBJECT: SPECULATION ON IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT CRISIS ON DC PARTY

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SUMMARY. VIRTUAL CERTAINTY OF NEAR TERM GOVERNMENT CRISIS HAS ALREADY BEGUN TO GENERATE SPECULATION ON IMPACT OF CRISIS ON CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY. ISSUE IS IMPORTANT SINCE DC NOW PREPARING FOR CRUCIAL PARTY CONGRESS SCHEDULED FOR EARLY MARCH AT WHICH KEY POLICY AND LEADERSHIP QUESTIONS MUST BE FACED. DESPITE SPECULATION BY A FEW OBSERVERS REGARDING POSSIBILITY OF COLLUSION OR AT LEAST COINCIDENCE OF INTERESTS BETWEEN PSI SECRETARY DE MARTINO AND CERTAIN DC LEADERS (E.G. MORO) IN PRECIPITATING CRISIS NOW, EMBASSY HAS NO EVIDENCE THAT SUCH COLLUSION EXISTS. HOWEVER, IT IS ALREADY CLEAR THAT ONE IMPORTANT EFFECT OF CRISIS LEADING TO THREAT OF EARLY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS WOULD BE TO REDUCE CHANCES OF EARLY GENERATIONAL CHANGE WITHIN DC PARTY LEADERSHIP. END SUMMARY.

1. COLLUSION THEORY: WHEN SOCIALISTS BRING DOWN MORO-LA MALFA GOVERNMENT, REPERCUSSIONS WILL NOT ONLY BE FELT IN TERMS OF GOVERNMENT PARALYSIS BUT ALSO ON THE POWER BALANCES WITHIN THE DC PARTY. ALREADY THE QUESTION IS BEING ASKED "WHO BENE-
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FITS" IN THE DC FROM DE MARTINO'S DRAMATIC DECISION. THE NEXT

QUESTION ASKED IS WHETHER THERE MAY BE A SECRET AGREEMENT INVOLVED WITH ANY DC LEADERS. ON THE BASIS OF PRESS REPORTS AND EMBASSY SOURCES IN THE DC AND PSI, WE HAVE NO RPT NO HARD EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT IDEA THAT DE MARTINO COLLUDED WITH MORO OR ANY OTHER DC LEADERS IN PROVOKING CRISIS EARLIER THAN ANTICIPATED. HE HAD AMPLE REASONS OF HIS OWN FOR HIS ACTION (REFTEL). THIS SAID, HOWEVER, IT IS ALREADY CLEAR FROM DC SOURCE COMMENTS ON LEFT AND RIGHT OF PARTY THAT EACH SIDE IS ALREADY WEIGHING ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF CRISIS TO ITS INTERNAL PARTY POSITION.

2. VIEW FROM DC CENTER-RIGHT: SOURCES IN DC CENTER-RIGHT CLOSE TO FANFANI AND PICCOLI HAVE TOLD EMBOFF THAT MORO STANDS TO BENEFIT MOST FROM CRISIS AT THIS TIME. REASONING IS THAT CRISIS WILL "FREE UP" MORO TO COMPETE FOR PARTY SECRETARYSHIP AND THAT THREAT OF EARLY ELECTIONS WILL CAUSE DC TO RALLY AROUND TRADITIONAL LEADERLIKE MORO RESPECTED BY WIDE MAJORITY IN PARTY. IN ADDITION, DC CENTER-RIGHT IS EXCEEDINGLY SUSPICIOUS THAT PARTY LEFT DESIRES TO POSTPONE CONGRESS AS LONG AS POSSIBLE WHILE ATTEMPTING TO SHIFT PARTY BALANCES IN ITS FAVOR. CRISIS, THEY NOTE, MIGHT RESULT IN POSTPONEMENT OF DC CONGRESS.

3. ATTITUDE OF DC CENTER-LEFT: DC SOURCES CLOSE TO MORO AND DC SECRETARY ZACCAGNINI EXPRESS FEAR THAT DC CENTER-RIGHT WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF CRISIS TO ADOPT STRIDENT ANTI-COMMUNIST LINE TO ATTACK ZACCAGNINI SECRETARIAT. THEY POINT TO STATEMENT DEC 4 BY DC CHAMBER GROUP LEADER PICCOLI CALLING FOR DC CONGRESS TO GIVE "UNEQUIVOCAL (NEGATIVE) RESPONSE" ON QUESTION OF DC RELATIONS WITH COMMUNISTS. PICCOLI STATEMENT ALSO CRITICIZED THOSE IN DC WHO GIVE A "TIRED NO" TO PCI FOR TACTICAL REASONS, BUT REALLY ARE OPEN TO BRINGING THEM INTO THE MAJORITY. ABOVE ALL, DC CENTER-LEFT SOURCES FEAR THAT CRISIS WILL LEAD TO EARLY ELECTIONS AND "POLARIZATION" OF ELECTORATE ALONG LEFT-RIGHT LINES.

4. THE OLD GUARD: WHILE IT IS PREMATURE TO SPECULATE EXTENSIVELY ON RAMIFICATIONS OF CRISIS WHICH HAS NOT YET OCCURED ONE EFFECT IS CLEAR. A CRISIS LEADING TO THE THREAT OF EARLY ELECTIONS WILL DO MOST HARM TO "YOUNG TURKS" IN DC TRYING TO

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REVITALIZE THE PARTY BY EASING OUT SOME OF OLD GUARD LEADERS. IT IS THE TRADITIONAL LEADERS AS A GROUP WHO STAND TO BENEFIT MOST FROM A CRISIS AT THIS STAGE SINCE THE PARTY IS UNLIKELY TO CARRY OUT A SUBSTANTIAL GENERATIONAL CHANGE IF FACED WITH THE THREAT OF EARLY ELECTIONS. VOLPE

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